CLAIMS:

1. A method for applying wear reducing material to a tool joint useful in a wellbore in drilling operations, the method comprising

positioning the tool joint adjacent laser beam apparatus,

delivering wear-reducing material to a location on the tool joint to which the wear-reducing material is to be applied, the wear-reducing material having a melting temperature, and

heating the wear-reducing material with the laser beam apparatus to a temperature not exceeding the melting temperature of the wear-reducing material thereby welding the wear-reducing material to the tool joint.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the wear-reducing material is heated with a laser beam that is defocused so that the melting temperature of the wear-reducing material is not exceeded.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the tool joint is made of tool joint material and the wear-reducing material is heated with a laser beam that is defocused so that the tool joint material is not melted.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the wear-reducing material is applied in a pattern of intermittent spaced-apart areas of wear-reducing material.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the intermittent spaced-apart areas of wear reducing material provide fluid flow paths therebetween for enhancing fluid flow past the tool joint when it is within a wellbore.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising

applying the wear-reducing material to the tool joint so that cracks are formed in the wear-reducing material for reducing stress in the applied wear-reducing material.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the laser beam apparatus is defocused so that no plasma is formed adjacent the tool joint.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the wear-reducing material is applied with a substantially uniform thickness to the tool joint.

9. The method of claim 9 wherein the thickness varies between ± 0.020 inches.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein a metallurgical bond is formed between the wear-reducing material and the tool joint.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the wear-reducing material includes carbides.

12. The method of claim 2 wherein the carbides are in a matrix of wear resistant material

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the tool joint is made of base metal and there is less than 5% dilution of the base metal by the applied wear-reducing material.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein the tool joint is made of base metal and there is less than 2% dilution of the base metal by the applied wear-reducing material.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein the wear-reducing material is combined with friction reducing material.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein the wear-reducing material is from the group consisting of carbides, borides, silicides, and nitrides.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein the wear-reducing material is alloyed with an alloying element from the group consisting of chromium, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, boron, carbon, aluminum, titanium, zirconium, tantalum, sulfur, silicon, phosphorus, bismuth, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, promethium, samarium, europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, ytterbium, and lutetium.

18. A method for applying wear reducing material to a tool joint useful in a wellbore in drilling operations, the method comprising

positioning the tool joint adjacent laser beam apparatus,

delivering wear-reducing material to a location on the tool joint to which the wear-reducing material is to be applied, the wear-reducing material having a melting temperature,

heating the wear-reducing material with the laser beam apparatus to a temperature not exceeding the melting temperature of the wear-reducing material thereby welding the wear-reducing material to the tool joint,

wherein the laser beam apparatus is defocused so that no plasma is formed adjacent the tool joint,

wherein the wear-reducing material is applied with a substantially uniform thickness to the tool joint,

wherein a metallurgical bond is formed between the wear-reducing material and the tool joint,

wherein the wear-reducing material includes carbides,

wherein the carbides are in a matrix of wear resistant material, and

wherein the tool joint is made of base metal and there is less than 5% dilution of the base metal by the applied wear-reducing material.

19. A tool joint to which wear-reducing material has been applied by a method for applying wear-reducing material, the method comprising positioning the tool joint adjacent laser beam apparatus, delivering wear-reducing material to a location on the tool joint to which the wear-reducing material is to be applied, the wear-reducing material having a melting temperature, and heating the wear-reducing material with the laser beam apparatus to a temperature not exceeding the melting temperature of the wear-reducing material thereby welding the wear-reducing material to the tool joint.

20. A method for applying wear reducing material to a tool joint useful in a wellbore in drilling operations, the method comprising

positioning the tool joint adjacent laser beam apparatus,

delivering wear-reducing material to a location on the tool joint to which the wear-reducing material is to be applied, and

heating the wear-reducing material with a defocused laser beam of the laser beam apparatus thereby welding the wear-reducing material to the tool joint.

21. Any patentable invention disclosed herein.